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SUBJECT: NUEVO LEON'S NEW CABINET HAS FEW SURPRISES

REF: A) MONTERREY 352

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1. (SBU) Summary: New Nuevo Leon Governor Rodrigo Medina released the names of his cabinet members on October 3. With the exception of his choice for the Secretary of Public Security, Medina's choices overwhelmingly reflect continuity from the prior administration, which is not surprising given that he was his predecessor's - ex Governor Jose Natividad Gonzalez Paras' - hand-picked successor. Of the 16 cabinet level appointments announced, 11 served in the prior administration: one remains in his post, and another 10 are either switching seats or assuming higher ranking positions within the new administration.

Secretary General of Government

2. (U) Medina tapped Javier Trevino Cantu, who has worked as Vice President of Senior Communication and Corporate Affairs of Cemex, Mexico's construction materials giant, since 2001, to be his Secretary General of Government. Trevino is a political veteran who previously served as former President Ernesto Zedillo's Deputy Secretary for Administration at the Treasury Department (1998-2000) and as Under-Secretary for International Cooperation in the Foreign Ministry (1994-1998). From 1989 to 1993, Trevino served as a public affairs officer at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C. Trevino is a board member of the Woodrow Wilson Center's Mexico Institute and the Arizona State University's North American Center. He also serves as a Professor of Monterrey TEC's Graduate School of Public Administration (EGAP), is a contributing editorialist to the local daily "El Norte," and serves as the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Korea to Monterrey.

Secretary of Finance and Treasury

3. (U) Alfredo Garza de la Garza -- Chief Officer of State Government for the outgoing administration -- will be the new Secretary of Finance and Treasury. Garza has held both elected

and appointed positions at the state and municipal level. He served as the Mayor of the municipality of Linares, and as a local representative in the legislature. He was Director of Development for Southern Nuevo Leon, and Director of the State Program for Business Promotion. He also brings to his current post experience as the Comptroller for the City of Monterrey, and as Chief Accountant of State Revenue. Garza De La Garza's nomination was forwarded to the State Legislature on October 5 for pro forma confirmation.

Attorney General

14. (U) Alejandro Garza y Garza, an Assistant Attorney General in the Nuevo Leon Public Ministry in the outgoing administration has been nominated to become the state's Attorney General. He brings a wealth of experience to the post, having served as Director General of Investigation, Director of Expert Services, Director of Agents of the Public Ministry, and Agent of the Public Ministry in Guadalupe, San Pedro, and Monterrey. In September 2006, Garza y Garza's brother -- Marcelo, a high-ranking state police official -- was murdered by a hit man outside a church in the Monterrey suburb of San Pedro Garza Garcia. Garza y Garza's nomination was forwarded to the State Legislature on October 5 for pro forma confirmation .

Secretary of Public Security

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15. (SBU) President of the state Citizen's Council for Public Security Carlos Juaregui Hintze takes over from Aldo Fasci Zuazua as State Secretary for Public Security. Juaregui, a businessman, has also served as president of the Civic Council for the Institutions of Nuevo Leon, A.C. (an umbrella NGO working on behalf of other NGOs) and as president of the state's Review Board for Civil Servant Compensation. Juaregui's selection is one of the few surprises among Medina's selections.

Public security deteriorated dramatically during Governor Gonzalez Paras' tenure, and given the army's relatively strong track record in combating organized crime, many analysts had expected Governor Medina to name a military officer (either active duty or retired) to the position of Secretary of Public Security. (Comment: Juaregui has long been an outspoken voice for reform who has advocated better police officer vetting. During a recent meeting with the Ambassador, he emphasized citizen participation in evaluating police chiefs and espoused penal reforms aimed at providing prisoners with educational opportunities in order to dissuade them from joining the ranks of organized crime. Ref A. End comment.)

Chief of the Executive Office

16. (U) Medina tapped SRE Ambassador Carlos Almada, the outgoing governor's International Affairs coordinator as Chief of his Executive Office for the State of Nuevo Leon. Almada has served as Director General of Social Communication and as Spokesperson for the President of the Republic during the Zedillo Administration. He has also served previously as Chief Officer

of Government, Chief Officer of the Secretary of Energy, Mines, and Parastate Industries, and Secretary of Administration for the State of Mexico. Amada said his first task will be to ensure that his office is in compliance with the recent modifications to the Organic Law passed by the state legislature, which realigns areas of responsibilities among the state's various agencies.

Secretary of Education

17. (U) Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon (UANL) rector Jose Antonio Gonzalez Trevino, is the new Secretary of Education. Gonzalez Trevino has been a professor at the UANL School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (FIME) for 35 years, and has held various high-level positions at the university during his career. Antonio Gonzalez declares he will maintain and extend Nuevo Leon's position as a leader in education by improving infrastructure and approaches to education at the earliest stages. Specifically, Gonzalez states that he hopes to leverage evaluative tools such as ENLACE to identify areas for improvement. (Comment: ENLACE is the National Evaluation of Academic Success in Educational Centers, a test utilized to measure secondary and primary students' ability in Spanish and Math. Additionally, one other subject is tested each year; for example, in 2009, Civics and Ethics were tested. While Nuevo Leon students' ENLACE scores are consistently above the national average and rising, some observers note that students need to be tested according to a more objective international standard. End Comment.)

Secretary of Health

18. (U) This position is now occupied by Dr. Jesus Zacarias Villarreal Perez, who steps down as Director of Medicine at the University Hospital. He previously served as Secretary of Health to former Governor Fernando Canales, President of the State Council for Medical Services, and Director General for the Coordination of Specialized Regional Hospitals. Zacarias Villarreal states that his priority is increasing diagnostic

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capabilities dedicated to identifying the H1N1 virus, ensuring that one lab is available for each municipality and four for each sanitary district. He also emphasizes the need to address dengue fever, and supports programs to combat obesity. (Comment: Nuevo Leon is divided into four urban and four rural sanitary districts. Post has noted media reports of insufficient capacity in some of the rural districts, requiring patients to travel to urban centers for treatment. End comment.)

Secretary of Social Development

19. (U) Juana Aurora Cavazos Cavazos, outgoing Subsecretary of Human Resources with the Secretary of Education, takes over as Secretary of Social Development. In the past, Cavazos has served as City Councilwoman for the city of Allende, and as the city's mayor. Previously, she has held the post of Federal Congresswoman. Cavazos is also the Secretary General of a local District Delegation for the National Syndicate of Education Employees.

Secretary of Economic Development

¶10. (U) Othon Ruiz Montemayor, Secretary of Finance and Treasury in the prior administration, has become the Secretary of Economic Development. Before entering government service, Montemayor worked in finance with the FEMSA group, where he was Director of Finances and General Director. He has also served as President of the Banker's Association of Mexico, and Director General of the Finance Group of Banorte. Montemayor expressed a desire to reduce administrative barriers for businesses and improve logistics, especially between the urban center of Monterrey and developing communities such as Linares, Sabinas and Montermorelos where multinationals have established production facilities. In 2007, former Governor Gonzalez Paras called upon him to rescue the state's flagging organizational efforts in support of the International Forum of Cultures held in Monterrey that year.

Secretary of Labor

¶11. (U) The exiting administration's Executive Secretary of the Counsel of Coordination for the Integral System of Public Security of Nuevo Leon, Alvaro Ibarra Hinojosa, has moved to the position of Secretary of Labor. He has previously served as the State of Nuevo Leon's Director of the Civil Registry, Subsecretary of Political Development and Institutional Relations, and Subsecretary of Citizen Service and Religious Affairs.

Secretary of Public Works

¶12. (U) Lombardo Guajardo Guajardo, who occupied this position in the outgoing administration, remains in this position with the Medina administration - the only member of the previous cabinet to remain in place. Guajardo has twice served as the Municipal President of Apodaca, and three times as the Director of Public Works for the same city and, most recently; as Director General of Water Services and Drainage of Monterrey. He is a former federal Congressman. Guajardo's appointment is a strong vote of confidence from Governor Medina.

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Secretary of Sustainable Development

¶13. (U) Fernando Gutierrez Moreno, Director of the Institute for Environmental Protection of Nuevo Leon, took over as Secretary of Sustainable Development. He is also the President of the Consultory Council for Sustainable Development and has served as Director of Planning and Environmental Development for the Secretary of Urban Development. Gutierrez has worked as a

part-time professor in the state's leading academic institutions: the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon (UANL) and the Technological Institute of Monterrey (ITESM).

Comptroller and Secretary of Transparency

¶14. (U) Jorge Manjarrez Rivera, an economist trained at the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon and at the University of Colorado, assumes this post. He has served as Secretary of the City of Monterrey, the State Secretary of Social Development, and the Director General of the State Institute of Housing.

Legal Counsel to the Governor

¶15. (U) Governor Medina chose as his Legal Counsel Hugo Alejandro Campos Cantu, Assistant Attorney General Juridical of the State Attorney General's Office. Campos Cantu served on the outgoing governor's Juridical Council.

General Director of DIF Nuevo Leon

¶16. (U) Elenitza Canavati Hadjopolus becomes General Director of the Integral Development of the Family (DIF) Neuvo Leon. Ms. Canavati Hadjopolus has experience working with UNICEF Mexico, the Association for Integration and Support for Handicapped Persons, and with the Coordination of Volunteers in the DIF of Monterrey.

Secretary of Social Communication

¶17. (U) The Secretary of Social Communication is now Eloy Garza Gonzalez, most recently Director of Political Analysis for the Secretary of Government. Garza Gonzalez has also worked as the Director General of Political Development in the same Secretariat. He is a part-time professor in the Department of Political Science and Communications of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon.

Comment:

¶18. (SBU) Despite a public emphasis on the need for a clean break from the previous administration, Medina's cabinet choices demonstrate a strong affinity for his predecessor's power base,

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if not his policy priorities. Nothing makes this more clear

than his choice to leave Lombardo Guajardo Guajardo, the Secretary of Public Works, in place. This is not only a strong endorsement of Guajardo Guajardo, but an affirmation of his predecessors emphasis on investment in public infrastructure, which has resulted, among other projects, in an extension of Monterrey's metro system, the construction of the Park of Investigation and Technology Innovation (PIIT), and the expansion of Monterrey's "Paseo," a river walk park and tourist attraction that now reaches deep into Monterrey's downtown.

¶19. (SBU) At the other end of the scale is Governor Medina's choice of a relatively inexperienced individual - Carlos Juaregui Hintze - to occupy the important position of Secretary of Public Security. It may be that Medina's surprise choice of Jauregui - an administration outsider - belies a greater awareness on his part of the threat that security issues pose to Nuevo Leon and a desire to placate increasingly vocal civil society voices concerned about rising violence, bracketed by the conclusion that a fresh approach is needed to reform security agencies and battle internal corruption.

¶20. (SBU) As outgoing Governor Gonzalez Paras has publicly acknowledged, the debt burden that he passes to his successor - currently measured at greater than 50% of the state's annual revenues, a significant premium over the average burden of 17% of revenues among all Mexican states - leaves Governor Medina less room to maneuver during the next six years. Given Governor Medina's overwhelming choice of not only partisans, but administration insiders, post foresees few radical departures from his predecessor's trajectory outside the realm of security; within the realm of security, post is encouraged by the new Secretary's intentions to tackle real reform. His key task will be to reform and cleanse an entrenched, infiltrated police bureaucracy. (Note: More information on the challenges the incoming administration faces will follow septel. End note.)
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